

Read: Isaiah 40:1-11

God Foretold Comfort for His People

Isaiah 40:1-2a

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

When children are little and they get hurt, they will come running to a parent. There is nothing more healing for little ones than the hugs and kisses of a mom or dad. There is an invisible magic in how quickly a kiss will heal whatever is making them cry. Kisses and hugs bring great comfort. As children grow and their difficulties and pains become more complicated, will hugs and kisses still solve their problems?

During Isaiah's time, God's people were in captivity. But God loved his people, even when he had to discipline them because they disobeyed him and did wrong. He sent them prophets to try to keep them faithful to him, to bring them comfort, and to remind them of his promise that his son Jesus would more than cover the payment needed to save them from their sins. What comfort these words must have been for God's Old Testament children!

What brings you comfort? We do not always look in the right place for comfort. We sometimes look for it the possessions we own. Other times, we brag about our achievements. We hurt the people that hurt us, thinking that getting even will make us feel better. But this is wrong. We need to look to Jesus for comfort and to God's promise that he gives his peace and comfort to all his people. In a world of sin and darkness, pandemics and death, interrupted schedules and lives, Jesus' birth and his perfect life and death are our comfort and our salvation. Our God comforts us. "He tends his flock like a shepherd: he gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young" (v11).

So this Advent season, sit back and get comfortable. God's got you. He will comfort you when hurting. He will carry you through any trouble.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for Younger Children

- Tell your parents how best they comfort you when you get hurt by someone?
- How does God comfort you when you get hurt by sin?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Why did the Israelites need comfort from God?
- Before God comforts you with his forgiveness, recount how you hurt someone today that you feel sorry for. What tender words do you now want to say to them?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Read Isaiah 40:9. What should you say when you see someone struggling and sad?
- Recount a Bible story that gives you comfort and why.

Closing Prayer:

Thank you, Lord, for speaking tender words of comfort to us. In these days before Christmas, use those words to cheer us when we feel sad and to encourage us when we are afraid. Amen.

Hymn: CW 11:1 – Comfort, Comfort All My People

“Comfort, comfort all my people; Speak of peace,” so says our God.
“Comfort those who sit in darkness, Groaning from their sorrows’ load.
Speak to all Jerusalem Of the peace that waits for them;
Tell them that their sins I cover, That their warfare now is over.”